The College of Health Professions is comprised of six disciplines: Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, Public Health, Clinical Psychology, Athletic Training, and Kinesiology. In 2021-2022, the College had an enrollment of 713 students on the Macon and Atlanta campuses. In addition to bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs on the Macon and Atlanta campuses, the College offers postgraduate Physical Therapy residencies and fellowships, and a Physician Assistant residency. The College also operates the Mercer Physical Therapy Clinic, which serves patients in Atlanta as well as Mercer students, faculty, and staff.

**College Highlights**

- Total enrollment in the College of Health Professions in 2021-2022 was 713 students: 113 Doctor of Physical Therapy; 208 Master of Medical Science (Physician Assistant); 105 Master of Public Health; 91 Doctor of Psychology; 9 Master of Athletic Training; 24 Doctor of Public Health; 106 Bachelor of Science in Public Health; and 57 Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology students. This represented a 12.6% increase in students in the College compared to 2020-2021.

- The College of Health Professions awarded 38 Doctor of Physical Therapy, 70 Master of Medical Science (Physician Assistant), 56 Master of Public Health, 14 Doctor of Psychology, 3 Master of Athletic Training, and 31 Bachelor of Science in Public Health degrees at the 2022 commencement ceremonies.

- All programs in the College of Health Professions are fully accredited by specialized accreditation agencies.
  - The Doctor of Physical Therapy program is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) through 2028.
  - The Physician Assistant program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) through 2027.
  - The Public Health programs (undergraduate and graduate) are fully accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) through 2026.
  - The Doctor of Psychology program is Accredited, On Contingency (initial accreditation status) by the American Psychological Association (APA) through 2023.
  - The Master of Athletic Training program is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) through 2025.
  - The Physical Therapy Postgraduate Neurologic Residency in collaboration with the Shepherd Center is fully accredited by the American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education (ABPTRFE) through 2027.
  - The Physical Therapy Postgraduate Orthopaedic Residency is fully accredited by the ABPTRFE through 2026.
  - The Physical Therapy Postgraduate Cardiovascular and Pulmonology Residency is fully accredited by the ABPTRFE through 2031.

- The College of Health Professions offers five combined degree programs: DPT/MPH, DPT/MBA, MMSc/MPH, PsyD/MPH, and PharmD/MPH.

- The Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology program is offered on the Macon campus as a traditional, undergraduate program and began in Fall 2021; 57 freshman and sophomore students declared kinesiology as their major in year one of the program. The first graduates in kinesiology are expected in 2024.

- The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) program began in Spring 2022 on the Atlanta campus and online with two concentrations in social epidemiology or health equity and diverse populations; 24 students are in the inaugural cohort. The first DrPH graduates are expected in 2024.

- Faculty published 28 peer-reviewed manuscripts, gave 86 scholarly presentations at regional, state, national, and international meetings/conferences, and received $212,957 in grants and contracts in 2021-2022.

- The College of Health Professions offers multiple postgraduate residencies and fellowships. In 2021-2022, there were 10 physical therapy residents (9 orthopaedic and 1 neurologic) and 2 physical therapy orthopaedic manual fellows.

- The Mercer Physical Therapy Clinic, which operates on the Atlanta campus with one clinician and one physical therapy postgraduate orthopaedic resident, had 4,861 patient visits in 2021-2022, which was an 11% increase over the previous year.

**Student Highlights**

- The Doctor of Psychology program achieved a 100% match rate in applying for the pre-graduation, yearlong internships in phase one of the national match. This is the sixth consecutive year at 100% match rate.

- The Master of Medical Science graduating class of 2022 had a first time pass rate of 99% and an ultimate pass rate of 100% on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination, the licensure exam for the profession of physician assistants.

- The Doctor of Physical Therapy graduating class of 2021 had a first time pass rate of 100% on the National Physical Therapy Exam, the licensure exam for the profession of physical therapy. Data for the class of 2022 are not finalized.

- College of Health Professions students provided over 20,000 hours of healthcare-related service (service-learning, volunteerism, community-based) to the community.
Fifty scholarly platform/poster presentations were made by College of Health Professions students at regional, state, and national professional conferences and three peer-reviewed manuscripts were published by students in collaboration with faculty.

**Nathan Arnett**, DPT class of 2023, and **Jillian Watson**, DPT class of 2022, served as Core Ambassadors for the Student Physical Therapy Network of the American Physical Therapy Association, Georgia Chapter.

**Vaishnavi Bavadekar**, BSPH class of 2022, was selected as a Research Fellow at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Niswender Laboratory.

**Reagan Blalog**, PA class of 2023, and **Keisha Johnson**, PA class of 2022, were selected as National Health Service Corps Scholars.

**Emilie Corluyan**, MPH class of 2022, was selected for the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellowship in Overdose Prevention Communication with the CDC.

**Michelle Dennis**, DPT class of 2022, received the national Minority Scholarship Award for the American Physical Therapy Association.

**Carly Esposito**, DPT class of 2022, was recognized as the national Outstanding Student Physical Therapist for the American Physical Therapy Association, Academy of Orthopaedics.

**Justin Henry**, BSPH class of 2023, received the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study abroad in Costa Rica.

**Rachel Karr**, PA class of 2023, and **Sarah Nowicki**, PA class of 2024, were elected as Student Representatives for Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.

**Eunice Larbi**, MPH class of 2023, was one of 22 students selected nationally for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Internship Program.

**Nyla Lieu**, PA class of 2023, and **Matilde Rodgers**, PA class of 2024, were elected Student Representatives to the Assembly of Representatives for the national Student Association of the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

**Abigail Niersbach**, DPT class of 2023, was elected President, **Laura Flick**, DPT class of 2023, was elected Vice-President, and **Matthew Wild**, DPT class of 2024, was elected Treasurer of the Student Physical Therapy Network of the American Physical Therapy Association, Georgia Chapter.

**Somtochukwu Obiegbu**, BSPH class of 2022, was selected for the Performance Excellence Internship Program at the Agency for State and Territorial Health Officials.

**Taylor Parks**, MPH class of 2023, was selected as an ORISE Research Fellow in the CDC Division of Scientific Education and Professional Development.

**Jennifer Pitman**, PA class of 2022, was selected as Community Nutrition Fellow in the American Academy of Physician Assistants and PA Foundation.
Jendai Sealey, BSPH class of 2023, received the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study abroad in Spain.

Jillian Watson, DPT class of 2022, was the recipient of the national Volunteer of the Year Award for the American Physical Therapy Association, Academy of Pelvic Health.

Stefan Williams, MPH class of 2022, was selected for the ORISE Fellowship at the CDC Global Epidemiology, Laboratory and Surveillance Branch and Information Systems.

Faculty Recognition and Awards

Dr. Robert Baeten served as Director-at-Large of the Political Action Committee for the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.

Dr. Beth Collier served on the Board of Directors of the Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy. Assistant Professor Jennifer de la Cruz served on the Board of Directors of the Southern Gerontological Society.

Dr. Jeffrey Ebert received the Achievement in Education Award from the American Physical Therapy Association, Georgia Chapter.

Dr. Emily Gabriel was appointed to serve as the District 9 representative on the National Athletic Trainers’ Association Professional Education Committee.

Dr. Cheryl Gaddis was appointed to the Georgia Society of Public Health Education Continuing Education Committee.

Dr. Hank Heard and Prof. Catherine Sadowski were elected as Delegates to the American Academy of Physician Assistants, House of Delegates, representing the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.

Dr. Gail Kemp and Dr. Craig Marker received a $1.28 million, 4-year grant from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Graduate Psychology Education Program Training Grant for integrated behavioral health for pain management in community-based primary care settings in rural and urban areas in Georgia.

Prof. Erin Lepp served as Board Chairperson for the Georgia Farmworker Health Program Advisory Board and was re-appointed as a Features Editor for the Journal of Physician Assistant Education.

Dr. Suzie Madden serves on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Rural Health Association.

Dr. Craig Marker was reappointed to the American Psychological Association Division 5 (Quantitative and Qualitative Methods) executive committee.

Dr. LeAnne Martinelli was elected as President-Elect for the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants and was elected Chief Delegate to the American Academy of Physician Assistants, House of Delegates, representing the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.
**Dr. Timothy McMahon** received the Outstanding Physical Therapist Award from the American Physical Therapy Association, Georgia Chapter.

**Dr. Mark Stillman** was reappointed to the Society for Health Psychology, Integrated Primary Care Curriculum Committee.

**Dr. David Sultan** served as Director of the Investigaciones Traslacionales, Soluciones Logísticas y Estratégicas de Panamá, Panama City, Republic of Panama.

**Dr. Leslie Taylor**, **Prof. Jennie de la Cruz**, and **Dr. David Taylor** completed year 3 of 5 of a $475,000 grant from HRSA: Bureau of Health Workforce for the development, implementation, and assessment of an age-friendly curriculum.

**Dr. Elaine Thomas** was reappointed to the Georgia Psychological Association Ethics Committee.

**Dr. Deborah Wendland** was appointed Program Organizer for the 2022 Combined Sections Meeting of the American Physical Therapy Association, Academy of Clinical Electrophysiology and Wound Management.

**Faculty Publications**


**Collier NB, Taylor L**. Fostering awareness of implicit bias using an adapted visual thinking strategy and reflection. *Journal of Physician Assistant Education*. 2022;33(2):145-147. doi:10.1097/JPA.0000000000000425


Kelly A, Wendland DM. A student physical therapist’s perspective on her efficacy providing culturally competent care: a reflective case study. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*. 2021;19(4):Article 10. Available at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/ijahtsp/vol19/iss4/10/

**Faculty Presentations**


McGregor C, Baeten R. Etiologies and Diagnostics of Sudden Cardiac Arrest in Young Athlete. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.
Norman Z, Baeten R. Continuing Debate of Treatment Options for Patent Ductus Arteriosus. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Hyche R, Baeten R. Familial Hypercholesterolemia. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Cattledge GH. Past Due: How Medical Debt Impacts Families and Communities - Medical Debt: A Social Determinant of Health. Auburn First Baptist Church and the East Alabama Medical Center, Auburn, AL. April 2022.


Heller M, **de la Cruz J**. Emerging Threat of Baylisascaris Procyonis on Pediatric Medicine. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Leach M, **Dickerson E**. Recognizing and Battling Osteoporosis. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.


Boudreaux BD, **Frederick GM**, Evans EM, O’Connor PJ, Schmidt MD. Characteristics Associated with a Poor 24-Hour Activity Profile in University Students. Southeast American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting, Greenville, SC. June 2022.


Taylor AM, Boudreaux BD, **Frederick GM**, Evans EM, Schmidt MD. Alcohol Consumption and Physical Activity, Sedentary, and Sleep Behaviors in University Students. Southeast American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting, Greenville, SC. June 2022.


**Heard H**. Dunning-Kruger Effect. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. March 2022.

Duval M, **Jackson S**. Plant-Based Diet for the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Type 2 Diabetics. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Pittman J, Lepp E. Tackling Obesity with Nutrition Education. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Giambanco C, Lepp E. Significant Manifestation of Renal Nutcracker Syndrome. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Johnson K, Lepp E. Treating the African American Woman Living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.


Bailey EN, Marker CD. Uniting the Unit: Examination of Parental Psychological Distress on Child Externalizing Behaviors. 32nd International Conference of Psychology, Prague, Czech Republic. July 2021.

Castellano B, **Marker CD**. The Likelihood of Depression among Individuals with a Substance Use Disorder in the Criminal Justice System. Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Annual Conference. Virtual. November 2021.


Castellano BA, **Marker CD**. The Role of Substance Abuse and Depression in the Criminal Justice System. American Psychological Association Annual Conference. Virtual. August 2021.


Manocchio M, Bruckner A, Wasserman O, **Marker CD**. Understanding Another Mechanism Underlying ACEs and Substance Use. Southeastern Psychological Association 68th Annual Meeting, Hilton Head, SC. March 2022.


Jones A, Sadowski C. Pediatric Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia and Advances in Early Recognition, Diagnosis, and Treatment. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Patel S, Sadowski C. Tolvaptan as a Disease Modifying Therapy for Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Mason S, Salmon A. Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis and Assessing the Role of Biologic Immune Modulators. Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. April 2022.


Killingsworth KD, Stillman MA. Utilizing Telehealth Platforms in Providing Psychosocial Interventions for Pediatric Chronic Illness. Society of Pediatric Psychology Annual Conference, Phoenix, AZ. March 2022.


Everly T, Miller SW, Taylor D, Taylor LF, de la Cruz J. Are Health Sciences Accreditation Criteria Age-Friendly? Mercer University 2022 Atlanta Research Conference, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA. March 2022.


